

## **FACEBOOK BLOGS**

**What follows is a small selection of what I have been writing on Face book. I can see that I ought to have planned this earlier and sorted out dates and themes. They all come from May 2019. One date is easy to guess. It was written the day before the fortieth anniversary of Margaret Thatcher becoming prime minister.**

**The first one is an attempt to make some serious points as amusingly as I can.**

**Theresa May is steadfastly against another referendum. She believes that a decision once taken must not be reversed. When, however, it comes to her Brexit Deal that does not apply. Defeated three times she is submitting it again. She is stubborn when she says NO and just as stubborn when she insists that others must say YES.**

**One thing that is lacking in all this Brexit kerfuffle (a word I first saw used in The Eagle comic) has been a lack of debate about the plural of referendum. Could it be referenda? Must it be referendums? What is a gerund? What is a gerundive? At school clause analysis was one of those devices that for a while I felt had been invented to take the joy out of reading and writing. But I do like to see subordinate clauses well demarcated. A publisher once returned a chapter to me with all my carefully placed commas removed and instead some editor seemed to think that the rule for commas was that they be distributed by the inch irrespective of any effect that might have on meaning.**

**Apparently we are supposed to say referendums and not the more romantically sounding referenda. Another choice might be plebiscite. Not being a pleb this would have the benefit of preventing Jacob Rees-Mogg (spell check gives me Mug) from participating.**

**Really, referendums are not a way to run a navy. In 2011 we had a badly designed and even more badly explained binding referendum on our voting system. Regrettably we decided to retain the poor system we have now. In 1951 Churchill's Conservatives won the general election. Who got most votes? Attlee's Labour Party.**

**By the way, although the 2011 vote was binding surely we can say that it wasn't. The 2016 vote was not binding but Cameron said that it was. Which is more important, the words in an Act of Parliament or what a prime minister says that they mean?**

**Never mind. Parsing is such sweet sorrow.**

**Here I am reflecting upon the destructive impact of Thatcher and her ism. And upon the failure of Blair to reverse her policies. I mention my wife who died last year.**

**Tomorrow is on my mind. Ada and I had been living together for almost a year and were about to get married at the end of May 1979. We had bought a house....this house...."Do you like books then?", said the removals men. I replied that they had yet to see Ada's.**

**A few weeks after moving in Thatcher became prime minister. Her attack upon society began. Who remembers the huge hypocritical lie with which she began her assault upon what she later told Women's Own did not exist: society?**

**"Where there is discord may we bring harmony".**

**Inflation became higher under her, although we were persuaded that it was lower. Unemployment became massively worse, although she kept altering the way that we counted it so that it looked lower. North Sea Oil paid for the destruction of communities.**

**We were told to buy shares in what we already owned as nationalised industries and services (Don't forget to tell Sid). Some of us were stupid enough to do that. Today those industries and services are owned by the nationalised industries and services of other countries. Every time the price of a train ticket goes up by a pound here it goes down by a pound in the those countries.**

**Thatcher personified the capitalism described by Marx. Those without power become commodities and are alienated from their own potential to become fulfilled humans.**

**How I wish Ada had lived to see us expunge all of Thatcherism from the body politic. In 1997 we stupidly thought that was about to happen. Instead we were poisoned by TB. New Labour continues to circulate within the veins of socialism. Blair and his courtiers are desperate to continue Thatcherism while pretending to be centrists. Equality scares them. Supporting the truly Semitic Palestinians horrifies them. Shining a socialist torch upon the likes of Netanyahu and Trump must not happen. The Blairites take comfort from their friendship.**

**May the Third 1979 marked a disaster. The rich became richer and the poor became poorer. The gap between the two has never ceased growing.**

**Who can be happy living in a society in which the owners of Rolls Royces (no longer a British company) drive swiftly past a food bank?**

**Again Brexit is on my mind. Perhaps my impatience with people who say things like, “Well it was a democratic vote” is discernable. The less a vote depends upon truth the less democratic it is.**

**Jeremy Bentham said that natural rights were nonsense and that inalienable natural rights were nonsense on stilts. That, by the way, did not mean that he had any kind of antisocial disposition, just the opposite. His pupil, John Stuart Mill, is usually thought to have been the first person to apply the label ‘stupid’ to Conservatives. The pair of them prompt me to coin a phrase as we approach the E.U. elections. To vote Tory would be nonsense. To vote Brexit would be nonsense on stilts.**

**It seems that Leave voters included people that associated the E.U. with unwanted immigration. The U.K. actually benefits from immigration. Others had a general feeling of pissedoffness. Hardly surprising given what government had inflicted upon us since 2010. Yet others had virtually zero knowledge of how the E.U. worked and the influence we had inside it. That left them vulnerable to rubbish written on the side of a bus. Some may have had fantasies based upon black and white films about how Britain single-handedly won the war. Reach for the Sky. Bridge on the River Kwai. And lots more. Some, saw in the E.U. an over bureauroctacised and overly capitalist conspiracy against socialism. I have some sympathy with this view but to leave while making ourselves subservient to it shall only weaken us.**

**I know I am repeating myself but though a self-sacrificing socialist vision may be attractive it won't be like that. In 1913 Britain was at its peak of power. In my young days our merchant fleet dominated the seas. Our aircraft industry was fantastic. BSA was the biggest motorcycle firm in the entire world. No one would dream of buying a Japanese car. All, all is gone. Thatcher destroyed so much of industry and switched our national philosophy from public service to private greed.**

**I have watched Corbyn speak to and inspire socialists from across Europe. So please Jeremy go for it. I know that many Labour constituents voted for Leave but they need to hear your articulation of socialist values. And socialism is international. Remember the song. You can find the words to do this.**

**Just don't pretend that THAT referendum was in any way, shape or form democratic. Again to repeat myself, the Goddess Demokratia does not accept votive offerings that are fake.**

**When we are on stilts and we fall we really shall hurt ourselves.**

**Cliff Jones, Empire Day 2019**

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